

Ch 10 Congress

1. Congress—111th started in January 2009
 - A. Two houses of Congress—**House of Representatives and the Senate**—formed a bicameral legislature because of history, practicality, and theory.
 - B. Term of Congress lasts two years. Divided into two sessions—one per year.
 - C. Special sessions of Congress can only be called by the President in the case of emergency.
2. House of Representatives
 - A. Size
 - i. 435 members—decided by Congress—not a number set by the Constitution.
 - ii. **Census Bureau**—every 10 years the re-apportion the 435 members based on each state's population
 - iii. California—55—Iowa 5—Seven states with 1
 - iv. District of Columbia, Guam and others elect a delegate that is not a member and cannot vote.
 - B. Term
 - i. Serve a two year term
 - ii. Incumbents have a big advantage in getting reelected
 - iii. There are no term limits
 - C. Election
 - i. Election day—The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November
 - ii. State Legislatures divide the state into voting districts and each district elects a representative—**Gerrymandering** is illegal
 - iii. **Wesberry v. Sanders** (GA)—one man one vote
 - iv. Urban areas are rapidly gaining votes and rural areas are losing them
 - v. **Off year elections**—election year where the Presidency is not being decided—usually the party in power loses seats in both houses
 - D. Requirements to serve
 - i. Must be at least 25 years old
 - ii. Must be a citizen for at least 7 years
 - iii. Must be an inhabitant of the state you are elected from
 - iv. Must live in the district you are elected from—tradition not in Constitution
3. Senate
 - A. Size
 - i. 100 members—two from each state
 - ii. Framers wanted the Senate to be more of an enlightened and responsible body
 - iii. Represent an entire state—more diverse population and a broader range of interests.
 - B. Term
 - i. 6 year term—unlimited –Strom Thurmond (R. SC) served nine terms.
 - ii. Staggered terms—only 1/3 expire every 2 years (max of 1 per state) which provides a **Continuous body**

- iii. Longer terms—more job stability, less likely to be pressured by public opinion—larger constituencies are designed to help Senators focus on the “big picture”

C. Election

- i. Originally chosen by state legislatures until the **17th Amendment** which allowed the people to vote on Senators

D. Requirements to serve

- i. 30 years of age
- ii. Citizen of U.S. for at least 9 yrs
- iii. Must be from the state from which he/she is elected

4. Members of Congress

A. Characteristics of Members

- i. Most are white males
- ii. Average age is upper 50's—physical and intellectual peak of a person's life
- iii. One-third are lawyers
- iv. Jeanette Rankin—First woman-Republican—1916-1919 and 1941-1943—voted against WWI and WWII
- v. More women, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans being elected
- vi. Nearly all members are married, average 2 children, religiously affiliated, nearly all have been to college, considerable political experience

B. Roles

- i. Legislator and representative of their constituents
- ii. Committee members—must screen proposals and decide what goes to the floor—oversight function—monitor agencies of the Executive branch
- iii. Servants of their constituents
- iv. Politicians

C. Voting Options

- i. **Trustee**—each question must be decided based on its own merits
- ii. **Delegate**—agents of constituents—vote the way people back home would
- iii. **Partisans**—vote based on the stance of their party
- iv. **Politicos**—try to balance the elements of the previous three

D. Regulation of Members

- iv. Can only refuse to seat a member if they do not meet requirements
- v. Can punish and remove members for “bad behavior”

E. Salary and benefits

- i. wages \$162,000 per year
- ii. Health and life insurance
- iii. **Franking Privilege**—free mailing of letters—Average amount is \$109,000
- iv. Pension—over \$150,000
- v. Tax deduction for 2 houses
- vi. Free air travel
- vii. **Speech and Debate Clause**—cannot be sued for slander or libel arising out of their official conduct